# "THE MAGIC SKIN"

High Class Fiction by the Famous French Novelist HONORE DE BALZAC

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The transferrer of section Prench novelists upon of true love is not estamally pleasing to the ordinary sone and health; Andlo Saxon mind. Yet there are, or have leen. English-speaking critics- and of reptation at the who see in the combination the very arms of Art with a capital, and deep insight into inverer, it is cafe to us that the most enthusiastic as its price," and the mahogany case afficied with author suther tuberculosis, and the most applicated entire of the female persuasion the ensed lungs. Negretbelissa us we are told, officially to admire "Cample" and "The Magic Skin" w morels of our versurable Secretary of Agriculture, "I in low Thomans, he had already given gromple of its communications on the field of Erenth liter ted a pre-representation is world wide,

## Marquis de Valentine.

M. Le Marquis Raphael de Valentine, having ventured his bost frame at a game bling rable in the Palats Royal, wandered forth to the banks of the Seine with the intention of committing spiride.

He was a good looking young fellow, por of an ancient name; an orphan left unexpectedly destitute at the death of his parents. He had spent two years in through a friend, become possessed of a small fortune and set out with the avowed intention of killing himself by dissipation and excesses. Being balked in the handable intention by the fact that his money gave out before his vitality, thereby preventing him from pursuing the primrose path to its end, he had decided

low might pull him out again, decided light into the gloom of the gallery.

tation inwardly because of the doom rays of light. which he had deliberately fixed for himself and which every minute drew nearer. "Hat here is an impression of what the leaden clouds and occasional gusts of are vidently an orientalist, perhaps you winds rain. Nature itself seemed to con- can read this inscription," said the old store to plunge the young man into an man, bringing the lamp nearer, agonizing costacy. He wanted to escape Valentine read, inscribed on the skin lose with death. It was in truth an sire me? Take me." fort to gain courage, a prayer for a Noting the deep interest taken in the old his won't to make

# The Mysterious Box,

young shopkeeper's assistant showed him about. It was a large shop of many rooms and several stories and was filled teantings, armor-thousands of articles from many countries and of many ages: trough of his death, the surroundings gave me wealth, ignorance taught me. or the anst arms of articles which apreaded to his senses and his intellect. where he resemed to move in a fantastic which dry up the sources of his existercent blending all things real and un- ence. Two verbs express all forms in

What does that box contain" he sud- and Action. rests asked of the attendant, pointing to Here, in this Magic Skin, are Will and

tranger and would creature. It was getting flack new and the man appeared holding a lamp above his head. Brave excesses of Desire or Will? mon roused from sleep, might have trembled before this person who seemed orbagus. A singular expression of youth

cap, so fitted to the head as to frame shall sound through Paris." the forehend and yet to allow the long. The old man laughed. "Do you think

the blanched visage. His small, green Your suicide is only postponed." eyes were bare of eyebrows or lashes Craftiness was in the sinuous lines and skin and see if, by the time I reach the the circular creases of the forehead.

of the great paintings by that immortal place. artist. When the view of that picture burst upon him Valentine forgot the

refuge

closed before his eyes. Suddenly recalled to himself-thrown sharply back into ering about him the wits of the town, his resolve on suicide-Valentine cried them drunk. He is going out to set up out: "The die is cast-it must be death?"

"Ah, I was right to suspect you!" exclaimed the old man, and grasped Ra- by murdering his best friend and the een my duit and I done it " "The Magic Skin" is phael's wrist with a grip of iron. Valenable, and made Raise famous, sithough time smiled sadly and said: "Fear noth-tion. ing: it is my death and not yours to

And then Valentine told the master of the shop of his intended suicide. "I will tell you once for all," said he, "that I now vanished from the mind of Raphom in the deepest, the keenest, the most ignoble poverty. But that is only one reason why I must die. I will spare myself the revelation of my untold suffernot long past his majority, the posses- ings which are beyond the power of human language to express. I ask neither succer nor consolation."

"Eh" ch" cried the old man, making dire poverty and literature; had then, a sound like the cry of a hawk, "without giving you a centime I will make you richer than monarchs; more powerful, more respected than any constitutional king can ever be. Turn around and behold the Magic Skin!"

## The Magic Skin.

Valentine turned and saw hanging to take a short out by way of the Seine, against the wall a piece of shagreen the He backed at the river for some time dimensions of which did not exceed those and then, considering that if he jumped of the skin of a small fox. By some inin during daylight some meddlesome fel- explicable phenomenon it threw a vivid

to wait until night to carry out his de- Raphael went up to the pretended fallsman inwardly scoffing at it. Neverthe-In the meantime he strayed aimlessly less, moved by a natural curiosity, he away from the river which, to a person carefully examined the piece of skin and contemplating plunging into it with sui- found that the black grains of the leather cidal intent, did not look so very allur- were so highly polished, its many stripes ng after all, and presently found himself were so clearly defined that its granuin front of a curlo shop into which he lated roughness presented a thousand walked. He was in a state of great agi- little faces which vividly reflected the

Then turning the skin he exclaimed: Paris were a sad countenance beneath Orientals call Solomon's seal." As you

in sharp spasms of the soul which the in Arabic, the following: "If thou posreactions of his physical nature caused sessest me thou would possess all. But and he turned into the shop of the thy life would be my possession. Wish company with the idea of occupying his and thou shalt obtain thy wishes. But and by bargaining for works of art. measure thy wishes by thy life. It is which he had no money to buy, until the here. At every wish of thine I shall darkness came for which he waited to shrink like thy days. Dost thou de-

remulated such as criminals who doubt Magic Skin by Raphael, the old man said with cold irony: about dying! "Is it a mystery-or a

"I have offered that skin to many, wonders, antiques, curios, gems, tested it myself. I have been poor, like you; I have begged my bread. Nevertheless I have attained the age of 102 In smotons caused by the near ap- years and am a millionaire. Misfortune Will and Action.

"No-I have never tested the skin. I unload the young men of shattered will reveal to you, in a few words, the perves, hours sensibilities, overwrought great mystery of human life. Man excain and appropried body, into a state hausts himself by two instinctive acts, which these causes of death appear, Will

matisany hox which hung from the Action combined; here are your social call by a affect than "I do not know, ideas, your intemperate desires, your replied the meritant. "Monsieur has love that kill, your sufferings that make the low of that if you wish to see it I life too vivid-for it may be that pain is only violent pleasure-who shall de-The assistant left the gallery and the termine the point where pleasure becomes Never had Velentine seen such a word Wisdom is synonymous with Knowledge, and what is folly if not the

cesses," cried Valentine, snatching the to have usen from a neighboring sar- Magie Skin from its nail. "Come, let us see. I will to have a royal dinner, a bananimated the motionless eyes of the quet that shall outrival anything of its receming phantom who was, in fact, a lit- kind seen before. I will that my fellowtle, lean, shrunken old man, wearing a guests be young and witty and joyous black velvet rabe fastened about his waist to excess. That the night shall be adorned with ardent women! I will to have a on his head was a black velvet skull- drunken saturnalia, the echoes of which

white hair to fall on either side of his to see my floors open and bring up a tace. Without the fleshless arm, which table sumptuously served by beings of looked like a stick, upon which the vel. another world?" said he. "No, rash vet hung, and which the old man held youth, you have signed the compact; you high to throw the light upon Valentine, have only to wish and your wishes will the face might have seemed suspended be gratified, but-at the cost of your life! The circle of your days will be measured A gray beard, trimmed to a point, was by this skin, which will shrink according on the old man's chin, and his lips were to the number and strength of your de-... thin and tight drawn that you could sires, from the least to the greatest. currely see the line of the mouth on After all you wish to die, do you not?

Valentine thought the old man was jestand had a look of implacable sternness, ing with him and said: "I will take the bridge my luck changes. If I find you have not been jesting at the expense of a miserable man, I shall revenge myself The strange old man touched a spring, on you by wishing that you fall madly in bered in drunken sleep on couches or on woman's love, yet found himself seemand opened the mahogany case which love with a ballet girl.' So saying he had excited Valentine's curiosity. It conthrust the skin—which showed marvelous had excited Valentine's curlosity. It con-

Three Callow Youths.

As Valentine rushed from the door of weird sights of the gallery and the vi- the shop he ran violently against three sions which had tossed about his troubled some was the became once more a man; he left himself in the world of real thinself in the world of the first thin the world the first thin the world of the first thin the world the felt himself in the world of real things, whom he had known while he was play-

which wrung him. The gospel was there been searching for you this fortnight; in the calm kindness of those eyes to where have you been keeping yourself? which the troubled soul might fly for Come with us; we are on our way to a great feast-a regular orgic-at the house himan life and the noman soul, Witness all the The antiquary with a cold voice broke of one Taillefer, the amphitryon, who The Mare Sam' and Camille. In actual life, "I have covered that canvas with gold narrow-minded saturnalias of the petty tion, somehow, compelled him to pour modern Luculluses.

> realization of his present condition and and many of the learned and making a newspaper-you are just the man for him. Come! They say he got his money. mother of that friend during the revolu-

> "But what care we; he will have thirty which I referred. Why should I not ac- men of talent and bonor about his table knowledge the harmless deception I have tonight to eat the hodies and drink the practiced in pretending to want to buy blood of that family and we, you and I. models of candid youth and enthusiasm, will be accomplices in the deed."

All thoughts of jumping into the Scine ael-he became as one with his gay com-

collegung communities as an artistic concomitant heaven that relaxed the infernal tortures shouted: "Well met, Raphael; we have lirium, forgetfulness of the world were in the hearts of all, written on the floors, produced by diet upon the imagination. sounding in the riot, and flung like a veil Three cents a day I paid for my lodgacross every face in seething vapors.

While this orgie was going on, Valen- wore flannel shirts to save washing. I Are with a capital, and deep insignt into
the and the number seed. Witness all the concerning the absorption of Valentine with:

The antiquary with a cold voice broke of one Taillefer, the amphitryon, who time sat apart with Emile and gave him allowed myself for coal so much as, the story of his life, which a strong emotion of Valentine with:

The antiquary with a cold voice broke of one Taillefer, the amphitryon, who time sat apart with Emile and gave him allowed myself for coal so much as, the story of his life, which a strong emotion of Valentine with: tion, somehow, compelled him to pour linen and footwear enough to last for forth, and Emile, listening at first with impatience, soon became engrossed in the last decreased up only when limpatience, soon became engrossed in the last control of the last for three years, but dressed up only when limpatience, soon became engrossed in the last control of the last for three years, but dressed up only when limpatience, soon became engrossed in the last for three years, but dressed up only when limpatience, soon became engrossed in the last for three years, but dressed up only when limpatience, soon became engrossed in the last for three years, but dressed up only when limpatience, soon became engrossed in the last for three years, but dressed up only when limpatience, soon became engrossed in the last for three years, but dressed up only when limpatience, soon became engrossed in the last for three years, but dressed up only when limpatience, soon became engrossed in the last for three years, but dressed up only when limpatience, soon became engrossed in the last for three years, but dressed up only when limpatience, soon became engrossed in the last for three years, but dressed up only when limpatience, soon became engrossed in the last for three years, but dressed up only when limpatience in the last for three years, but dressed up only when limpatience in the last for three years, but dressed up only when limpatience in the last for three years, but dressed up only when last for three years, but dressed up only when last for three years, but dressed up only when last for three years, but dressed up only when last for three years, but dressed up only when last for three years, but dressed up only when last for three years, but dressed up only when last for three years, but dressed up only when last for three years, but dressed up only when last for three years, but dressed up only when last for three years, but dressed up only when last for three years are three years.

> law until he was twenty years old. When penses"-Valentine went on with his Raphael reached that age his mother had story. been dead ten years. Upon his birthday lodging house called the Hotel Saint-his father said to him: "My son, you are Quentine, kept by a neat and respectable of the ""." now a man. I have saved your youth from the evils which blast young men. You will take your degree in the course of a year. You have already gained sterling friends, and a love of work which is mecessary to men who take part in the public affairs of their country. For, Raphael, I intend not to make a lawyer or a notary of you but a statesman who did was confident that one day he would it the same as chargoal in little doses— Raphael's father, the Marquis de Valen- Pauline was a charming girl of artless

"You know I have studied the effects

ings, and I burned three cents of oil Fedora in a rage.
a flight. I tended to my own room and Raphsel to only two cents a day. I had clothes,

He had hired a room, the attic of a

ity of the divine face at once acted upon They greeted him joyously and one of was hot with wine, with pleasure, and two cents for milk, three cents for pork, been playing with him. Also his money the sole heir to a great fortune ity of the divine face at once acted upon they greeted nim joyously and one of was not with wine, with pleasure, and him. Something seemed wafted from them, whom the others called Emile, with speech. Intoxication, passion, debrought my mind to a singular lucidity.

Raphael suddenly rose with a startled brought my mind to a singular lucidity. write some "fake" memoirs of the em- a low voice to such other of the sudden pire which tided him over awhile, but good luck of the young marquis. Ho only for awhile. Finally he broke with

## Raphael Mad in Love.

To Rastignac he said: "That woman is fainting." cried another killing me; I can neither despise her nor forget her." "Better kill her." laughed in the haggard face of the new heir. Hi and I am no Othello. It is now no longer the image of his life? Raphael had been strictly brought up by his father, who educated him in the law until he was twenty years old. When the law until he was twenty years of the law until he was twenty years old. When the law until he was twenty years of the law until

filthy." "A pistol shot?"

or a notary of you, but a statesman who din was confident that one day he would it the same as charcoal in little dosesbecome the glory of our return to her and their daughter, little slow suffocation? My kind of suicide isn't showed it. Thin bands and hollow tembuse."

Pauline.

Pauline. "Excess, my dear fellow, throws down

good tack of the young marquis. Ho-laid the Magic Skin on the table and measured it with a napkin. He saw that it had shrunk perceptibly. "What is the matter" cried one. "Support him, he is

splendid banquet, surrounded by failed prostitutes, this deathbed of joy-was it

He looked three times at the talisman which lay on the napkin before him. He of my Fedora-of the Fedora who is tried to doubt, but there could be no there," he added, striking his forehead. doubt. He saw that every desire would cost him days of existence he believed "Bah." returned Rastignac, "horrid in the Magic Skin. He distended to his "Those slabs at the Morgue are his seat and amid the clamer and rati lery of the company, drank immederately, to forget for the time being his fatal

## The Bitter Harvest.

Some months after Haphael had come into the possession of the Magic Skin he sat in a large and gloomy house in the Rue de Varennes before a fire reading a newspaper. He was an invalid and worn, thin face-consumptive one would say to look at him.

Am yet the pervading feebleness of his frame seemed belied by the blue every which shone with an extraordinary pereption of everything around him. The ook was painful to behold-some wo have called it despair; others have said norse. It was, in fact, the deep and all-embracing powerlessness driving all his desires back into the depths of his soul.

On the wall before him hung the Mazie On the wall before him hing the Mazie Skin upon a white ground with a red mark around the edge of the skin so that whenever Raphael should so far forget himself as to wish for anything he could see at once how much the sk shrunk.

The first thing he had done upon con ing into his property was to seek out an old family servant. Jonathus by name, and place the ordinary routine of life in his hands.

The compact between them was that Jonathus should so arrange for everything, even for his breakfast; it was always ready as a certain hour and Jonathus told him. "Monsieur, it is time The bill of fare was muche out whole year; no changes all wed. had nothing to wish for. He had strawberries when there were strawberries, and the first mackerel which come to If the weather was fine, Jonathus told

him. "You ought to go out today, mas-ter"—and Raphael went. When he en-gaged Jonathus he said: "You are to take care of me like a babe in swaddling clothes," and Jonathus did so. Valntine dared not live like other men; he dared not desire anything.

dared not desire anything.

He had become a species of automaton; he abdicated life that he might live. And yet, before he could get really settled down into life, the Magic Skin had shrunk noticeably; and in spite of everything it sometimes shrunk now. For example, an old professor of his school days came to see him asking his in-fluence to obtain a position. "I can real-ly do nothing for you," said Raphael: "I sincerely wish you may get the position.

As he spoke he suddenly sprang up

like a frightened deer. He saw a slight, white line between the edge of the skin and the red mark, and uttered such a dreadful cry that the professor was terrifled. "Go, go, you old fool," he shrick-ed. "you will get the place, whatever it is, that you want.

One night Jonathus told Raphael ton-he ought to go to the opera-and Ra-phael went. In the box next to him young and beautiful lidy. It was Pauline, no longer poor, but rich. Her father had returned, as Madame Gaudin always said he would, and bad returned the challenge to ... If you want to go rich from India. Then he had soon died, into this sort of duel with existence, I leaving Pauline a large fortune.

Pauline and Raphael recognized each other and their acquaintance was re-newed. Love triumphed over even the fear of death-but the Magic Skin shi together and Eugene took it to gamble Raphael, however, convinced himself that he had been all along under some half gainst fortune.

Meantime Raphael put his affairs in gard to the talisman.

Meantime Raphael put his anairs in order. He paid Madam Gaudin what he owed her, said that he would not be back owed her, said that he would not be back ever. Thy presence has driven away my said. A new for six months, if ever, and had a little ever. private talk with Pauline.

Poor Pauline! He did not know that he loved her until he was to leave her.

griefs and refreshed my soul. A new life opens to me and the cruel past, with my sad follies, seems like a dream." e course of their talk Pauline con-that she loved him. But mar-That was out of the question—

They lived in huxury and love. Raphael threw the Magic Skin into a deep well in the rear court of his house and stress

to forget that it had ever existed. He dared to desire now like other men. One day old Jonathus brought to wife master something which, he said of the gambler. He was almost asleep ter. It was the Magic Skin shrunk when Eugene kicked the door open and piece six inches square. Jonat ne kicked the door open and piece six inches square Jon "Victory!" he shouted, and thought it was a new marine plant

Raphael was greatly agitated, but dis-As ing around the table like two cannibals tific men tried to have it destroyed by

> that he had consumption and must seels rest and recuperation at some German baths. He fled with only Jonathus as baths. He fled with only Jonathus as an attendant, forsaking Pauline, and solved to live again as a mere vegetable, to have no wishes, no desires. At the baths he was provoked into a duel and

Magie Skin. He wandered to the mountains and lived for a while in a peasant's hut. Finally a great desire came over him. could not resist, to see home came to him. He was the mere shadow of a man. The Magic Skin had shrunk

When the first raptures of the meeting must set up friendships at clubs and in orgie previously described. Regret was then he told her the story of the Magic cliques with people able to help him.

"Come with me," said Rastignac, "for debauch when excess has pressed with showed it to her, shrunk to a mere frag-

there, beautiful with terror. could command himself no longer, could ine! Pauline!" he cried; but she fled from him into a further room and locked the door. Raphael broke in the door and found her trying to strangle herself with

"A case of ordinary consumption," the doctors said; "that talk about a Magic

"AND THE MASTER OF THE SHOP APPEARED tine, was the head of an ancient, but for-plano-which he saved from the sale of gotten family in Auverge, whence he came up to Paris as a young man and achieved for himself an eminent position and attentive to the young man, and at court. But the Pavolution ruined him, before many months he had offered to

It was indeed a feast of Lucullus, garnished by wit and wisdom, to which the Taillefer. Nappery as white as new-fal- noble house, and, under the empire was a dear little sister be regarded the girl. len snow was on the table; the glasses shed prismatic colors in starry reflections; wax candles cast a flood of light; phael's mother to regain possession of the viands were served upon rare and part of her property, despoiled his father. costly plates under silver covers which Emperor to his generals, which were sitsharpened both appetite and curiosity. stimulating foods, exquisitely prepared, were placed before the guests, and wine of rare vintages and delicious bouquet.

# Progress of the Orgie.

As the dinner proceeded the conversafrom the dining-room into another large only a little island in the Loire, where

Beautiful as these women were, exquisknew them to be women without heart or poor relation. character, Liqueurs were served after the of extreme ambition; felt himself capacoffee; some of the guests already slum-the was at an age when he longed for tained a head of Christ by Raphael, one flexibilities—into his pocket, and left the an observing eye upon that scene would and compel love. have seen Milton's Pandemonium antici-

> pated. The blue flame from the circulating punch gave a ghastly and infernal color on an obscure street he set himself to

oung man sat down in the house of He, however, married the heiress of a teach Pauline music and languages. able to restore the family to its former state of affluence.

uated in foreign countries, and became All the rarest, most costly, and most engaged in a struggle with lawyers and the comedy was finished and also the timulating foods, exquisitely prepared, diplomatists and with Prussian and Ba-great work on the Will. The comedy was Raphael entered upon a career of the retain possession of these propertes.

The old marquis was deep in the laby-Flowers, fruit-everything that could rinth of these suits, upon which the pros-minister to the animal and sensual de-Raphael became twenty and his father at once enlisted him in the struggle which he was making. For a whole year which he was making. For a whole year lege, Eugene de russignat, wo he lived and thought in legal terms and conversed mainly of briefs and claims.

At the end of that time the Valentines tion with brotherly interest. Valentine lay buried, and with his last sou lost to the size of an oak leaf. tion grew brisk and brilliant and soon At the end of that time the Valentines became a babel of voices; the guests were were utterly defeated-their entire fortune getting drunk. Finally, all fushed with the claims of creditors Raphael signed wine and excitement, they were ushered away all his rights in the estate, keeping apartment, richly and luxuriously fur- mother lay buried. Ten months after his nished, where beautiful women served father died of a broken heart. After nished, where beautiful women served selling everything, even the furniture, them with black coffee in golden cups on Raphael realized from his father's estate

itely dressed as they were, Valentine strangers, but had none to spare for a

## and compel lo Battling with Poverty.

He dropped out of sight. In a garret went on: frantic laughter and shouts ex- gain fame and money. "Count it up,"

tignac's room and awalted the return charge of his room, which he had furrushed in

## The Plausible Rustignac. Thus did Valentile live for two years

would look at it.

With the great work on the Will he was preparing to startle all the learned given him such a strong constitution

societies in Europe, when he chanced to that his money gave out and he was still Finally a meet a man whom he had known at college, Eugene de Rastignuc, who in spite sumption fixed in him and his nervous again and Pauline. He returned Pauline of the shabby clothes he were put his system shattered. He sold even the lit-came to him. He was the mere shadow ton with protherly interest. Valenthe told briefly of his life and his hopes. And Eugene laughed, declaring that Raphael was a man of genius and a fool. He urged him to return to the world if he ever expected to accomplish anything. He ever expected to accomplish anything. He table of Tailliefer the morning after the said: "Pauline, I am a doomed man."

a beginning; I will introduce you to a strong hands the juice from the fruits of house where you will meet all Parls, our life and left behind nothing but the Parls, the Parls of beauties, celebrities worthless refuse. and millionaires, men who talk gold like

won't take any man, and whom, there-fore, no man takes. She is a female problem—half French and half Russian." Then he put the talis-clasped her in his arms, crying: "Pauline The result of this meeting with Ras-tignac was that Raphael flew back to the joys of the world. He saw the Count-came in. He had been one of the guests fect frenzy, only to find that she was he was the very man he wanted. His but an allegory

grace and innocence about fourteen years old. Gradually, so gradually that Valentine had not realized it, Pauline took

table. cried, and the two young men went danca dear little sister he regarded the girl.

He began to write two great works, one a comedy which should make him rich and famous at once and the other. "Five thousand dollars!" said it in his pocket and returned home it reads to the thing resisted all attacks. He is the thing resisted all attacks. He is the thing resisted all attacks. Rastignac when they had quieted down panic. enough to live on; for us it will be enough to kill us."

### Burning the Candle. They divided the money, and at once

varian courts of justice in the effort to a crude thing—the initial blunder of a wildest dissipation. He made it a point his desire that he might kill his man young man just out of college; no one to kill himself quickly, to surpass in ex- which he

am with you. Happiness may come by the way." Raphael was carried off his

In the course of their talk Pauline con-fessed that she loved him. But mar-

they were both so poor. And besides there was his compact with Rastignac.

Wedded poverty was disgusting to Raph-

"We can now die at our ease."

"For most men that would be

He fled from the house;

against fortune

et. "But the money?" he said. They could all the money they could scrape

went to make a campaign

And besides

You might have thought that death was Chrysostom. When such people adopt there, smiling down upon a plague-a book it becomes the fashion. the family. Raphael had, the night prow you shall see the beautiful before, when he had told Emile his story, Countess Fedora—a marriageable woman, measured with a napkin his Magic Skin. who has a fabulous income, but who "It has brought me my first wish," said

fell desperately in love with her. the night before, but had gone away trace of the Magic Skin. He still kept his humble lodgings, but early. Now he stepped up to Raphael had to nearly starve himself in order to and informed him that he had long been